

**Grant Makes It Possible for Work to Begin on First Phase of New Vision for San Jose's The Alameda** By Mary Gottschalk. Community-Newspaper July 22, 2010

Months of community meetings resulting in a new vision for The Alameda are closer to fruition, thanks to a major funding grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

The 2010 Regional Transportation for Livable Communities grant of \$3.132 million to the San Jose Department of Transportation will be used to implement Phase 1A of the plan that came out of a series of community meetings on the future of The Alameda in early 2010.

The grant requires San Jose to contribute \$783,000, which is 20 percent of the \$4.226 million total cost of the project, and although those who have been involved in the project believe the City will come up with the money, **Councilman Pierluigi Oliverio**, who represents The Alameda area, says, "It's a significant amount of money and we don't have that money budgeted anywhere." He adds that he's concerned that the announcement of the grant "gives everyone the false illusion that it's money we're free to spend, but there's a bigger process in hand."

Matching funds for such grants usually come out of the city's capital improvement program budget.

The first changes will be to what the vision plan calls "the town center," which stretches along The Alameda from Stockton Avenue to Fremont Street.

Zahi Khattab, the DOT project manager who submitted the grant application, says the planned changes "are intended to help enliven The Alameda as a retail center and multi-modal transportation corridor."

"Some of those design elements include enhanced pedestrian crosswalks, corner sidewalk bulb-outs, ADA ramps, raised median with landscaping and pedestrian refuges, new lighting and special elements such as gateway and neighborhood markers."

Khattab says he expects the design process to start by the end of 2010 and be completed by August 2011.

After the design is reviewed and approved, it will go out to bid, with construction starting as soon as May 2012 with completion by February 2013.

"This is exciting, absolutely exciting," says Helen Chapman, president of the Shasta Hanchett Park Neighborhood Association, one of the driving forces behind shaping the vision.

"This was community driven. It was a collaboration of community leadership from several neighborhood associations and The Alameda Business Association and the Redevelopment Agency. They put together a process that I think will be the starting point for other communities to follow."

Khattab says there will be no new traffic signals installed along The Alameda, but he expects the changes will make it safer for pedestrians and motorists.

New crosswalks where pedestrians can push buttons and stop traffic will be put in at the existing signals, which are at Sunol Street, Race Street, Julian Street and Lenzen Avenue.

The landscaped medians will provide "refuge" for pedestrians crossing The Alameda, giving them a safe place to stand while waiting for traffic to clear.

Additionally, the changes will limit left turn lanes onto and off The Alameda for most neighborhood side streets.

However, Khattab says motorists should not have to travel more than three blocks before finding an opportunity to make a left or U turn.

The changes will also result in the loss of approximately 23 parking spaces along The Alameda.

Khattab says Caltrans is in the process of relinquishing control of The Alameda, which is also State Route 82, and that must be completed before any work can begin.

Phase 1B, which is not yet funded, will address the "Historic Way" portion of The Alameda, from Fremont Street to Highway 880.

It calls for reducing The Alameda from four travel lanes to two and adding bike lanes, making it easier for cyclists to travel along the street to Diridon Station.

"The lane reduction will require additional study and will likely require a traffic analysis to assess possible impacts to neighborhoods and other city streets and intersections," Khattab says.

It will also likely require an Environmental Impact Report and a general plan amendment.

The vision for The Alameda is the result of three large community meetings and several smaller stakeholder meetings in 2009 and early 2010. The final report and design strategies were prepared by BMS Design Group.

The study and report was funded by a \$250,000 Caltrans community-based transportation planning grant with an additional \$50,000 from the San Jose Redevelopment Agency.